

Community Voices: Dolores Huerta Exhibit visits Bakersfield College via Smithsonian Institution

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Living in the Central Valley means being surrounded by history. One of the region's most treasured and rich legacies is the farm worker movement. First lady Jill Biden's historic trip to Forty Acres in Delano and the bust of Cesar Chavez in the Oval Office both recognize the seminal importance of Kern County to the story of labor and civil rights for farm workers in the United States.

But how is this history taught in our schools? How well do young people have access to this local and national history? Given the Bakersfield City School District governing board's recent vote declaring April 10 Dolores Huerta Day and encouraging teachers to honor her history and legacy, Bakersfield College is happy to announce a new digital resource available for local teachers to sustain this effort and ensure the public has access to this rich history.

The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in Washington, D.C., has developed an exhibit honoring the life and legacy of Dolores Huerta. *Revolution in the Fields / Revolución en los Campos* has been touring the country the past three years and was hosted by Bakersfield College's Wylie and May Louise Jones Gallery during the spring of 2021 before heading to Park City, Utah.

Bringing the exhibit to Bakersfield was years in the making. By late 2020, it was clear the COVID-19 pandemic was going to keep the gallery doors closed to the public. With generous support, however, from the Lydia Jennings and Burns L. Finlinson

Endowment and the Bakersfield College Foundation, the exhibit has been converted into a 360-degree virtual tour available to the public via the Jones Gallery website.

Having the tour available virtually will ensure even wider access than previously imagined and in some ways offers a more engaging experience. Visitors can virtually explore some of the most significant aspects of the rich life and legacy of Dolores Huerta. From her life as an activist, mother, organizer, labor negotiator, to Latina civil rights icon, the exhibit captures the breadth and scope of her work and the issues that continue to drive the work of her nonprofit foundation.

The exhibit includes interactive videos, accessible PDF documents of physical panel displays, as well as testimonial videos. The exhibit's text and audio are available in Spanish and in English. In addition to the touring Smithsonian exhibit panels, the Dolores Huerta Foundation has generously loaned art, physical objects, and other historical artifacts from their collection, to accompany the exhibit and are available for viewing in the virtual tour.

The Smithsonian Institution recently featured the virtual tour in an online workshop lauding the innovative programming at Bakersfield College. Since launching at the end of March, the virtual tour continues to be accessed and utilized by educators across the country. During a recent virtual presentation by Dr. Taína Caragol, curator of Latino Art and History at the Smithsonian Institution, she assured that the farm worker movement will have a prominent place in a future National Museum of the American Latino in Washington D.C., including the story of Dolores Huerta.

The project team at Bakersfield College is hopeful that local teachers will take advantage of this important resource for students and the general public. We are optimistic that the virtual tour will excite young people about the history of Dolores Huerta and the importance of Kern County to Latino civil rights history. Interested viewers can access the virtual tour at <https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/art/jones-art-gallery>. The Smithsonian Learning Lab has also provided a variety of online resources

to help teachers develop curriculum related to the exhibit. More information can be found at <https://learninglab.si.edu/>.

The Dolores Huerta Gallery Team includes Oliver Rosales, Ronald Wrest and Jeffrey Huston.